(c) The MoUs are likely to be implemented soon and are expected to result in the creation of capacity building in the field of Science and Technology.

Indo-Afghan relations

1734. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:
PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether he visited Afghanistan in the month of February and had discussions with Afghanistan President and also other leaders during his visit;

(b) if so, whether India has agreed to provide more aid to Afghanistan during 2005-06;

(c) if so, the agreements reached between the two countries;

(d) by what time these agreements are likely to be implemented; and

(e) whether Afghans are looking in a capacity building and hoping to use India as a training ground for their teachers, doctors and administrators?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) External Affairs Minister visited Kabul on 15 February 2005. He met President Karzai, Baba-e-Millat and former King Zahir Shah, and Foreign Minister Dr. Abdullah. During the visit, he inaugurated the new surgical block of Indira Gandhi Institute of Child Health (IGICH), which has been reconstructed with Indian assistance and handed over 49 vehicles to the Afghan National Army. A package of support of IGICH was also announced, including training of doctors and paramedics in India and setting up of a diagnostic centre at IGICH.

(b) India has committed US $ 500 million over the period 2002—2008 for the reconstruction of Afghanistan.

(c) No agreement was signed during the visit of External Affairs Minister to Kabul.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) Government of Afghanistan considers capacity building as a foremost priority for the reconstruction of the country and has welcomed India's assistance in this regard. As part of rebuilding Afghanistan's institutional capacity, training for teachers, diplomats, journalists, judicial officials, women entrepreneurs, fligh engineers, doctors, paramedics, police officers and officials of Ministry of Light Industry and Geodesy and Cartography Department were conducted at various institutions in India.

Revalidation of Diplomate Passports

1735. SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether issue/revalidation of Official/Diplomatic Passport and Visa Note to Secretaries to Government of India from Ministry of Science and Technology has been done after they obtained political clearance and clearance of Screening Committee of Secretaries or Prime Minister.

(b) if so, the details thereof including countries visited, countries transited and purpose and duration of visit for the last three years, year-wise and category-wise;

(c) if so, whether above visits were private or official; and

(d) if not, the details of issue/revalidation of Official/Diplomatic Passport and Visa Note to above Secretries without approval of Screening Committee of Secretaries or Prime Minister for the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI KAPIL SIBAL): (a) to (d) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

India's stand after Tsunami

1736. DR. AKHILESH DAS: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the steps being taken by Government in the aftermath of the Tsunami disaster in the South Asian region to establish its position as a benefactor in the region and to prevent outside powers to get foothold in India's backyard;

(b) the expenditure involved; and